

SB 2093:
North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department
House Government and Veterans Affairs
Pioneer Room 8:30 AM
Thursday, March 25, 2021

Good morning Chairman Kasper, members of the committee, for the record my name is Ryan Gardner, West Regional Manager for the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. I appear today in support of SB 2093.

The vision of North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) is to enrich generations through experiences that connect people to places. We wish to pursue changes to section 55-08-05, specifically subsections 6 and 7, to allow NDPRD to better meet the requests of our local communities and visiting public as well as better align with national trends.

NDPRD oversees a total of 15 destination properties. Across these locations the agency has 16 rental meetings spaces and dozens of outdoor gathering locations such as picnic shelters, amphitheaters and acres of open green space. Driven by both the need for rental space amongst many of our rural communities and inherent beauty of our locations NDPRD continues to grow as a popular venue for weddings and other family friendly events.

As it stands now visitors can bring their own alcoholic beverages onto the properties for consumption, given they follow all current state and local laws. The individual nor the agency can bring in a vendor to provide such a service at this time at sites not described in subsections 6 and 7. This results in lost opportunities for local partnerships, customer experiences and revenue opportunities.

Currently subsections 6 and 7 of century code 55-08-05 allow for the limited sales of alcohol by concessionaires on the premises of Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park and the three properties we have located on Corps of Engineers properties around Lake Sakakawea. These include Lake Sakakawea State Park, Fort Stevenson State Park and Lewis and Clark State Park. These locations make up only 27% of our destination properties and mainly only service the communities located along the Highway 83 corridor.

The proposed changes to subsections 6 and 7 would allow NDPRD to best adapt to the changing demand from our visitors and our nearby communities by allowing the appropriate concessionaires the opportunity to provide a service during events held by the public, the agency and the community. It would also expand these opportunities across the state and not limit it to those four locations as earlier mentioned.